

CABINET – 5 DECEMBER 2001

LYMINGTON RECREATION CENTRE – CONSTRUCTION OF THE EXTENSION TO SPORTS HALLS STORE

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The facilities provided for the community at Lymington Recreation Centre include a school Sports Hall which is regularly used for school examinations
- 1.2 The community programme can be affected by these examinations for up to 70 days per year.
- 1.3 The number of desks and chairs required for the examinations varies from 50 – 270 and for the community programme to continue uninterrupted these desks and chairs need to be removed every evening prior to community use and following the evenings activities re-erected ready for the following morning.
- 1.4 A number of health and safety concerns have recently arisen regarding the removal and in particular storage of the desks and chairs and this report addresses those issues.

2. CURRENT POSITION

- 2.1 Due to the way in which the desks have to be stored there have been various safety concerns raised relating to both removing and replacing the equipment. They are:
 - 2.1.1 Excessive lifting and twisting of heavy desks.
 - 2.1.2 Turning over of stacks of desks on and off other desks.
 - 2.1.3 Tilting of high stacks of chairs – often over head height.
 - 2.1.4 Lifting chairs from the top of high piles prior to wheeling them into the hall.
- 2.2 A review of the safety issues following some minor injuries which had occurred during the storage of this equipment resulted in a change in procedures for storing the desks. Instead of storing them over night in the store provided, the desks and chairs were moved on to one of the badminton courts at the end of the hall.

- 2.3 This obviously reduced the range of activities which could be provided and had implications for income which are detailed later in the report.
- 2.4 A recent inspection by the Council's Health and Safety Officer further highlighted the health and safety issues surrounding the storage of this equipment. She reported:

"The storage facilities are very small and once all the equipment is in store there is no room at all to manoeuvre which means that in order to get out the staging or other items at the back of the store some of the stacked chairs and tables have to be moved out first. All the chairs and tables have also to be moved in and out every night during exams. The chairs and tables are awkward and very heavy, and cause a considerable manual handling hazard especially as space is so limited requiring additional twisting and pulling movements. Similarly the store holding the trampolines and mats etc is very restricted meaning that again there is a doubling up of handling/lifting operations to access equipment at the back of the store. I agree that the stores are inadequate for the volume of stored items, and I would strongly suggest that extra storage areas are found or constructed to try to obviate the need for so many lifting and handling operations."

3. OPTIONS

- 3.1 It has not been possible to find alternative storage areas within the school or the Recreation Centre.
- 3.2 With regard to additional storage the results of a full risk assessment, which included the provision of a freestanding temporary external unit has shown that an extension to the existing store is the only viable option.
- 3.3 This leaves 3 course of action for consideration:
- 3.3.1 To leave all of the examination desks in the hall for the duration of the exams. On the basis of last year's programme this would mean a major reduction in service to our clubs and casual customers given the major interruptions to all the activities in our programme.
- 3.3.2 To move the chairs onto one court at the end of the hall which would be less disruptive to the programme but would still mean a loss of some major elements particularly those associated with club bookings and activities for young people, including;
- a) Five A Side Football Bookings
 - b) Roller Disco's and Street Scene
 - c) Football Parties
 - d) Cricket League
 - e) Roller Hockey Practice and Matches
- 3.3.3 To construct an extension to the existing store which would allow the desks and chairs to be stored properly with no health and safety implications for employees.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The proposal is to extend the existing main hall store in order to make storage of the desks simpler and safer.
- 4.2 A larger store would allow the desks and chairs to be wheeled directly in and stacked in single rows rather than one on top of the other. Chairs could also be stacked at a safe height.
- 4.3 The extension will also allow other sports equipment to be moved in to and out of the hall more quickly and safely.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The estimated cost of constructing the store extension is £22,500 and will require a supplementary estimate.
- 5.2 The loss of income from leaving the desks in the hall for the duration of the exams is estimated at £14,556. Against that the estimated loss of income from moving the desks onto the end court of the sports hall is £6,228 with a potential for a further loss of income should more weekend bookings occur.
- 5.3 Without the store extension given the health and safety issues which have been highlighted the least cost option would be to store all the desks on the end court of the sports hall.
- 5.4 Based on current booking levels the payback on the cost of the store is therefore 3.6 years.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Council's Health and Safety Unit have been fully consulted and their comments are detailed earlier in the report.
- 6.2 As the proposed extension will be built on land owned by Hampshire County Council. The council is currently in consultation with the County Council with a view to obtaining consent.
- 6.3 It is likely that the proposed extension will require planning permission and the council planning officers are currently being consulted.
- 6.4 The employees involved in the actual moving and storing of the desks have been consulted and are fully behind the proposals.

7. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Without the store a number of activities involving young people would need to be cancelled including the Shadows Roller Hockey Club which involves upwards of 20 teenagers and Saturday evening Roller Discos which again attracts a teenage element.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Any storage extension that was constructed would be done so sympathetically with the rest of the building.

9. RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 That subject to any required Planning permission being granted and successful negotiation with the County Council the Cabinet recommend the Council agree to a supplementary Capital estimate of £22,500 in order to construct an extension to the store at Lymington Recreation Centre.

For further information:

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Background Papers: